

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A system for providing a user interface with search query
2 broadening, comprising:
 - 3 an input module accepting a query defining a search executable on
4 potentially retrievable information and parsing the query;
 - 5 a query broadening module providing a broadened query; and
 - 6 a presentation module presenting at least one of the broadened query and
7 results of a search executed on the broadened query.
- 1 2. A system according to Claim 1, wherein providing the broadened
2 query comprises determining a meaning for at least a portion of the query.
- 1 3. A system according to Claim 2, wherein providing the broadened
2 query comprises determining a related concept based on the meaning.
- 1 4. A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 an evaluation module providing at least one broadened search
3 characteristic to the broadened query.
- 1 5. A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 an evaluation module performing at least one of modifying, replacing,
3 supplementing, removing, or restating the at least one search characteristic.
- 1 6. A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 a selection module selecting at least one broadening search characteristic
3 from a set of words having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or
4 similar semantic meaning.
- 1 7. A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
 - 2 a selection module selecting at least one broadening search characteristic
3 from a set of words having a related conceptual meaning.
- 1 8. A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:

2 an operator provided with at least one broadening search characteristic to
3 request query broadening.

1 9. A system according to Claim 8, further comprising:
2 a delimiter provided with the operator to signal ordinary meaning with
3 respect to the operator.

1 10. A system according to Claim 1, wherein the query comprises a
2 plurality of search characteristics, further comprising:
3 a grouping module logically grouping at least two of the search
4 characteristics into a compound search characteristic, wherein the query
5 broadening module provides at least one broadening search characteristic for the
6 compound search characteristic.

1 11. A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
2 a hyperlink module presenting at least one search characteristic in the
3 broadened query as a hyperlink, wherein the query broadening module forms the
4 broadened query comprising the at least one search characteristic responsive to a
5 selection of the hyperlink.

1 12. A system according to Claim 11, further comprising:
2 a display module displaying the broadened query as a static list responsive
3 to a highlighting of the hyperlink.

1 13. A system according to Claim 11, wherein the hyperlink module
2 presents an option triggering selection of each such search characteristic in the
3 broadened query as a hyperlink.

1 14. A system according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation module
2 presents at least one search characteristic in the broadened query as at least one of
3 a static list, a menu of selectable search characteristics, a set of checkboxes, and a
4 list of selectable search characteristics.

1 15. A system according to Claim 1, wherein the presentation module
2 presents an option triggering selection of each such search characteristic in the
3 broadened query.

1 16. A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
2 a query engine executing the broadened query.

1 17. A system according to Claim 1, further comprising:
2 a graphical user interface interfacing the input module, the query
3 broadening module, and the presentation module.

1 18. A method for providing a user interface with search query
2 broadening, comprising:
3 accepting a query defining a search executable on potentially retrievable
4 information and parsing the query;
5 providing a broadened query; and
6 presenting at least one of the broadened query and results of a search
7 executed on the broadened query.

1 19. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 providing the broadened query comprises determining a meaning for at
3 least a portion of the query.

1 20. A method according to Claim 19, further comprising:
2 providing the broadened query comprises determining a related concept
3 based on the meaning.

1 21. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 providing at least one broadened search characteristic to the broadened
3 query.

1 22. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 performing at least one of modifying, replacing, supplementing, removing,
3 or restating the at least one search characteristic.

1 23. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 selecting at least one broadening search characteristic from a set of words
3 having a synonymous, alternate spelling, common root, or similar semantic
4 meaning.

1 24. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 selecting at least one broadening search characteristic from a set of words
3 having a related conceptual meaning.

1 25. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 providing an operator with at least one broadening search characteristic to
3 request query broadening.

1 26. A method according to Claim 25, further comprising:
2 providing a delimiter with the operator to signal ordinary meaning with
3 respect to the operator.

1 27. A method according to Claim 18, wherein the query comprises a
2 plurality of search characteristics, further comprising:
3 logically grouping at least two of the search characteristics into a
4 compound search characteristic; and
5 providing at least one broadening search characteristic for the compound
6 search characteristic.

1 28. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 presenting at least one search characteristic in the broadened query as a
3 hyperlink; and
4 forming the broadened query comprising the at least one search
5 characteristic responsive to a selection of the hyperlink.

1 29. A method according to Claim 28, further comprising:
2 displaying the broadened query as a static list responsive to a highlighting
3 of the hyperlink.

1 30. A method according to Claim 28, further comprising:
2 presenting an option triggering selection of each such search characteristic
3 in the broadened query as a hyperlink.

1 31. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 presenting at least one search characteristic in the broadened query as at
3 least one of a static list, a menu of selectable search characteristics, a set of
4 checkboxes, and a list of selectable search characteristics.

1 32. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 presenting an option triggering selection of each such search characteristic
3 in the broadened query.

1 33. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 executing the broadened query.

1 34. A method according to Claim 18, further comprising:
2 providing a graphical user interface interfacing the input module, the
3 query broadening module, and the presentation module.

1 35. A computer-readable storage medium holding code for performing
2 the method according to Claim 18.

1 36. An apparatus for providing a user interface with search query
2 broadening, comprising:
3 code for accepting a query defining a search executable on potentially
4 retrievable information and code for parsing the query;
5 code for providing a broadened query; and
6 code for presenting at least one of the broadened query and results of a
7 search executed on the broadened query.